

Corfu Butterflies in Spring 1977

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Various articles have appeared in *The Record* from time to time covering entomological activities in most parts of Europe but never, as far as I am aware, has the Island of Corfu had so much as a mention.

This spring, my wife and I decided to visit the island on a package tour to enjoy the spring flowers for which it is well known and at the same time we hoped to see something of its butterflies.

Flying time from Gatwick was about three hours and we arrived on the afternoon of 18th April. The weather was hot and sunny and the countryside looked delightfully green as we motored to our hotel in Corfu town. Between the hotel and the sea was a large public garden with many oleander bushes and in one corner a bed of stocks where a number of *Vanessa cardui* Linn., all very worn, were feeding on the flowers. Surprisingly no other butterflies were seen, nor did a cursory inspection of the oleander bushes produce a larva of the Oleander Hawk-moth, which I felt was a possibility. From some large trees lining one side of the garden the monotonous call of a scops owl could often be heard at night. The bird seemed quite undisturbed by the passing traffic.

The following day our bus took us to the coast at Paleocastritsa in the N.W. of the island, where the country is hilly with many olive trees and low mixed scrub. Several *Gonepteryx cleopatra* Linn. could be seen flying about the hillsides and white butterflies were common on the cultivated ground. All of the latter I was able to examine were *Pieris rapae* Linn., although its near relatives *Pieris mannii nayeri* and *Pieris ergane* H.G. could well have been present but undetected as the locality seemed suitable for them. Also seen that day were *Pararge megera* Linn. and *Pararge aegeria* Linn., although neither were common. A single *Vanessa atalanta* Linn. was observed and *Callophrys rubi* Linn. proved relatively plentiful. I see I made a note in my diary that this was not a very rich collection, but at least it was a start.

The 20th and 21st were overcast and occasionally wet, so we were able to concentrate on the flowers and make the acquaintance of many of the fine orchids which were the real highlight of the tour.

We awoke on the 22nd to cloudless skies and our bus took us part of the way up Mount Pantocrator, the highest point on the island and from whose summit one can look across the mile and a half wide Corfu channel to the barren coastline of Albania. Many fine orchids were found on this mountain but *cardui* and *megera* were the only butterflies seen.

The following day, when there was no planned expedition, I took the opportunity to explore some rough ground within walking distance of the hotel on the outskirts of the town.

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The results were not without interest as the area supported the only colony I found of *Coenonympha pamphilus* Linn. They were particularly interesting because the undersides of the hind wings of both sexes were almost unicolourous. *Pieris brassicae* Linn. and *P. rapae* were also seen and it was noted that the former were all considerably smaller than those one is familiar with at home.

On the 24th we visited Aghios Gordis beach on the west coast and spent the day in its vicinity. While there we saw the first of many *Iphiclides podalirius* Linn. — also noted were *Leptidea sinapis* Linn. in some numbers and odd specimens of *Aricia agestis* Schiff. and *Polyommatus icarus* Rott.

On the 26th, while at Aghios Mattheos, I met a young English bird-watcher who told me that a few days ago he had seen *Nymphalis polychloros* Linn. sunning itself while at rest on a tree trunk. I thought this very probable as there was no lack of its foodplant on the island. On this day too, I saw the first *Papilio machaon* Linn. The foodplant, fennel, is locally common in the more low lying parts of the island.

The next day our bus took us across the island to a point on the coast near the village of Kellia from where a rough path led down a steep slope to a lovely little beach backed by high cliffs. On the way down, red rumped swallows were collecting mud from a wet patch on the path to build their nests and several pairs of blue rock thrushes were seen flying about the cliffs. A single early *Limenitis reducta* Staud. was identified flying along a wooded path under the cliffs and later on the first *Nymphalis antiopa* Linn. appeared near the bus when we returned for our lunch, as well as further *machaon* and *podalirius*.

On the 29th we paid a second visit to Mount Pantocrator and found more butterflies about. At the very top of the mountain in an area of stony ground I netted a small black butterfly which proved to be *Erynnis marloyi* Boisd., the Inky Skipper, a butterfly I had not seen before. *Podalirius* in some numbers seemed to favour this high ground and were easily photographed as they fed on the low-growing flowers. Further down a single *Lycaena phlaeas* Linn. was identified, together with the blue *Glancopsyche alexis* Poda and the first *Melitaea cinxia* Linn.

On the 30th we hired a car and motored down to the southern end of the island, which is rather flat and uninteresting. As we sat in the shade of some tall willow trees near Lake Korisson, we watched a second *Nymphalis antiopa* Linn. sailing round the upper branches and periodically settling on a convenient sprig. This second sighting was interesting as the butterfly is reported in Higgins & Riley as not occurring on any of the Mediterranean islands.

On 1st May, our last day, the bus took us to Sidari on the north coast. Here I noticed the first *Colias croceus* Fourcroy flying over rough ground by the sea and captured a fine fresh ♀ *Pontia daplidice* Linn. on the shore as it fed on the flowers of a maritime plant.

So ended a most pleasant fortnight and although, as I noted in my diary, the island was not rich entomologically, I feel it has possibilities and a further visit, possibly in May, might well prove more fruitful.

A THIRD BRITISH SPECIMEN OF PAMMENE LUEDERSIANA (SORHAGEN). — This species has so far been recorded in Britain only from the Aviemore district (Youden, 1975, *Entomologist's Rec. J. Var.*, 86: 197 and Emmet, 1976, *ibid.*, 88: 88). The latter record was of a moth reared from bog myrtle (*Myrica gale*). A female specimen was captured by me flying over bog myrtle near Camghouran, Rannoch, Perthshire, on the evening of 18th June, 1977.

It is strange that this species seems to have been overlooked by those microlepidopterists who used to work the Camghouran area for long periods. Perhaps earlier specimens are yet to be found hidden in a series of other species. — E. C. PELHAM-CLINTON, The Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh, EH1 1JF, 24.viii.1977.

BISTON BETULARIA LINN. AB. CARBONARIA JORDAN AND OTHER LEPIDOPTERA IN IRELAND IN 1976 AND 1977. — On July 5th, 1977, I caught one *Biston betularia* Linn. ab. *carbonaria* Jordan at Blackrock, Cork City. As far as I am aware, this is the first Irish record of this ab. away from the Northern and Eastern coastal counties.

Other interesting Lepidoptera seen during Summer visits to Ireland in the last two years include: *Cyclophora linearia* Hüb., one, Carrigrohan, near Cloghroe, Mid Cork, 24.vii.77. *Euphyia biangulata* (Haw.), one, Knockalisheen, Mid Cork, 24.vii.76; one, Carrigrohan, Mid Cork, 31.vii.76; and one there again on 24.vii.77. *Apeira syringaria* (Linn.). Although described by Baynes as "Scarce and of sporadic distribution", I have found this insect on three occasions as follows: one, Clonsilla, Co. Dublin, 11.vii.76; one at Douglas, Mid Cork, 6.vii.77; and one at Dunshaughlin, Co. Meath, 14.vii.77. *Nudaria mundana* (Linn.), four, Carrigrohan, Mid Cork, 24.vii.77. *Atolmis rubricollis* (Linn.), one, Carrigrohan, Mid Cork, 24.vii.77. *Lithosia quadra* (Linn.), five, Carrigrohan, Mid Cork, 31.vii.76, and eleven there on 24.vii.77. *Agrotis trux* Hüb. s.sp. *lunigera* Steph., one, Oysterhaven, Mid Cork, 22.vii.77. *Hadena perplexa* (D. & S.) s.sp. *capsophila* (Dup.), two, Oysterhaven, Mid Cork, 22.vii.77. Along with the last two species, on 22.vii.77 a perfect specimen of *Aphantopus hyperantus* (Linn.) was found in the trap. All the above records are of examples obtained at m.v. trap. *References*: Baynes, E. S. A., 1964. *A revised Catalogue of Irish Macrolepidoptera*. Baynes, E. S. A., 1970. *Supplement to a revised Catalogue of Irish Macrolepidoptera*. — K. G. M. BOND, Lutzowst. 4, 32, Hildersheim, West Germany.